

Chafee Advisory Group

Third Meeting

August 5, 2020

Minutes

In Attendance: Jessica Trombetta, Kelli Puryear, Michele Safrin, Niambi London, Susan Radosti, Rachel Barth, Tosca Blandford-Bynoe, Tyhessa White, Alice Foulkes-Garcia, Dr. Steven Kairys, Suzanne Kreie, Durell Clark, Yolanda Allen, Anita Costello, Randi Mandelbaum, Aubrey Powers, Catherine Schafer

Absent: David Rosen, Mary Coogan, Kelly Nestor, Stefani Thachik, Dan Rhoton, Tatianna Mickens

1. Welcome, Introductions & Updates

- a. Welcome by Jessica
- b. Introductions and Self-Care Ice Breaker
- c. Review of minutes from 2/7/20 mtg
 - i. No changes – minutes approved & finalized
- d. Review of by-laws
 - a. Changed Article III, subset B “Appointed Members”, item C from “a representative from the Office of the Law Guardian” to “an advocate/attorney with experience representing adolescents”
 - i. No other changes necessary
- e. Chafee website in the works
 - i. Will be available in September
 - ii. Will be accessible via OAS website
- f. Contact List to be finalized
 - i. Sent to group prior to meeting for review/changes needed
 - ii. Send any changes to Susan at susan.radosti@dcf.nj.gov
- g. Ethics Information
 - i. Cathy Schafer (DCF Director of Grants, Integrity & Accountability) gave overview
 - ii. Group members considered “Special State Officers”
 - iii. In looking at vision/mission of the group, she doesn’t see any conflicts
 - iv. State Officials do not need to submit paperwork (i.e. JJC, DOL)
 - v. Completed ethics forms get returned to ethics@dcf.nj.gov

2. Broad DCF Updates

a. DCF Race Equity Committee

- i. Cathy Schafer gave brief overview of what is happening at DCF
- ii. Race Equity Committee created in June 2019
 1. Data shows greater stays for children of color
 2. Need to acknowledge and address disparities
 3. OAS will develop 1 pagers on Race Equity, Youth Thrive framework and Healing Centered Engagement
- iii. Internally at DCF

1. Make staff more aware
2. Allow staff to share ideas and feedback via internal email address

b. DCF Covid-19 Teaming Structure & Process

- i. Most of DCF moved to working remotely & virtual services
- ii. Set up “Red teams” regarding various internal and external operations to ensure continuation of services and supports to the community
 1. Developed Covid-19 website for staff, providers & families
 - a. www.nj.gov/dcf/coronavirus

c. Covid-19 Support for Older Youth

- i. CP&P cases have been extended thru Dec. 31, 2020
- ii. Foster Care Scholars have been provided assistance regarding housing as needed
- iii. Wrap Around eligibility funds extended and exceptional approvals granted
- iv. Commissioner concerned and involved
 1. Speaking with workers
 2. Attending Youth Council meeting
- v. Children’s Bureau also very interested and involved in what’s happening with young adults
 1. Opportunities to share Covid-19 related experiences
 2. Meetings with Independent Living Coordinators

3. Chafee Strategy Teams Update

- a. Work has moved forward during the Pandemic

b. Youth Councils

- i. Presented by Aubrey Powers, Executive Director of the DCF Office of Family Voice (OFV)
- ii. OFV came about after the Commissioner’s 2018 Listening Tour
 1. Families need their voices heard & considered
 2. Elevate the voices of our youth, moms, dads, resource parents
 3. OFV tied to ALL DCF divisions
- iii. Youth able to share their story while feeling safe
 1. “Leveling of the playing field”
 2. Treating youth & parents as equal partners
 3. Cultural responsibility
- iv. Youth Council kicked off in January 2020
 1. Two groups – North & South – meet 1X/month
 2. 24 young people on board, ages 15-22
 3. Created a guide for young people during Covid-19
 4. Meeting discussions include feedback regarding DCF systems change and current events (e.g. Black Lives Matter and social justice issues)
- v. 3 Subcommittees
 1. Sibling/Peer Advocacy
 - a. Developed proposals to be presented to DCF Executive Mgt
 2. Aging Out and Communications

- a. What supports are needed?
 - b. Financial Literacy
 - 3. Resource and Kinship Parent Training
 - a. Young people feel judged when moving into new homes
 - i. Need to move past former labels, diagnosis, etc
 - b. Looking at/reviewing PRIDE training
 - i. Nurtured Heart
- c. YAN (Youth Advisory Network)**
 - i. Presented by Kelli Puryear, Asst. Director of OAS
 - ii.
 - iii. Goal is to raise the floor and improve relationships and communication between programs and youth
 - iv. All work now being done virtual since Covid-19
 - 1. Zoom calls, webinars, newsletters
 - 2. OAS to send sample newsletters out to Chafee group
- d. LifeSet**
 - i. Presented by Rachel Barth, OAS Adolescent Program Specialist
 - ii. Rachel shared power point presentation on the LifeSet program
 - 1. PP will be shared to the Chafee group
 - iii. Pilot program moving forward despite Covid19
 - 1. Four Agencies in New Jersey selected
 - a. Acenda (Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester & Salem)
 - b. Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen (Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset & Union)
 - c. CarePlus (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris & Passaic)
 - d. Preferred Behavioral Health (Burlington, Monmouth & Ocean)
 - iv. LifeSet Virtual Info Session on Monday, August 31, 2020
 - v. Additional questions related to LifeSet can be sent to Rachel at Rachel.barth@dcf.nj.gov

4. Chafee Plan Implementation Adjustments

- a. Delayed due to Covid19 Pandemic
- b. Strategy teams to begin meeting in the Fall

5. Closing and Wrap Up

- a. Still looking for a CAG co-chair
- b. Still looking for a faith-based rep
- c. Next meeting planned for November 2020
 - i. Susan to send preliminary dates shortly

All ideas reflected are not endorsed by the agency.